

## Michaud Pushes for Trade Adjustment Assistance Overhaul

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WASHINGTON, DC

—Congressman Michael Michaud announced that the House is expected to consider and pass the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Globalization Act (H.R. 3920) legislation today. Congressman Michaud is an original cosponsor of this measure. H.R. 3920 incorporates some of the key provisions the Congressman has included in worker relief legislative packages in the 108th and 109th Congress.

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“This landmark legislation would expand TAA coverage to more workers, including service sector workers, and substantially improve the program’s training opportunities and associated health care benefits,” Michaud said. “The bill also creates new benefits and tax incentives for industries and communities that have been hit hard by trade.”

“I have been pushing for the inclusion of many of the provisions included in this bill over the last two Congresses,” Michaud said. “This legislation makes much-needed improvements to the TAA program. But it still doesn’t cure what ails us. While TAA helps workers who have been affected by trade, this Congress needs to stand up for the workers by ensuring we don’t pass any more trade agreements that outsource our jobs.”

H.R. 3920 doubles the current training funding cap from \$220 million to \$440 million and increases it to \$660 million by 2010. The bill also extends unemployment insurance benefits for up to 130 weeks if a worker enrolls in long-term training, including the completion of college. Under current law, income support is limited to a maximum length of 104 weeks.

The House bill makes several important changes to the existing Health Coverage Tax Credit and increases the subsidy from 65 percent to 85 percent. Congressman Michaud's worker relief legislation would have increased the subsidy to 100 percent of health care costs.

"The Health Care Tax Credit is still too expensive for workers and their families to take full advantage of in our state and throughout the nation. I am pleased with the compromise in this bill," Michaud said.

H.R. 3920 includes a package of tax incentives designed to encourage the redevelopment of communities that have suffered substantial reductions in manufacturing employment. Under this bill, communities designated as manufacturing redevelopment zones would be eligible for the special Work Opportunity Tax Credit classification that now applies to empowerment zones. Michaud's bill would have created a grant program for eligible communities affected by trade to develop a strategic plan for community economic adjustment and diversification.

"I have been pushing for additional aid to communities affected by trade," Michaud said. "Layoffs and closures have left too many Mainers with pink slips and too many communities with empty buildings. When job loss happens, everything is impacted --from the school district to child care to the housing market. I am pleased that this bill includes providing relief for these communities."

&ldquo;While this bill could certainly help workers and their families, it is not the fix of our broken trade policies,&rdquo; Michaud stated. &ldquo;We wouldn&rsquo;t need more TAA if we had a great trade framework. It&rsquo;s time to change the NAFTA trade model and develop a trading policy that puts our industries on a level-playing field. I believe in trade so long as it&rsquo;s fair for our workers.&rdquo;

The House is expected to consider the Peru Free Trade Agreement next week. As co-founder of the House Trade Working Group, Congressman Michaud is leading the opposition to the NAFTA-style trade agreements. Congressman Michaud is also co-founder of the House Labor and Working Families Caucus.

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